

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29 and 31 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please AMEND claims 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, and 32 in accordance with the following:

1.-21. (CANCELLED)

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~An~~ The information distributing method according to claim 1 for distribution of information corresponding to a request from a user terminal, comprising:

receiving the request from the user terminal and transmitting, to the user terminal, headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the received request and information indicating a way in which these information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;

displaying the headlines on the user terminal according to the layout information so the user can select any of the displayed headlines and receiving an identity of the selected headline from the user terminal;

distributing to the user terminal and displaying the information of the set corresponding to the headline the headline identity indicates; and

billing the user for the information of the set selected for display by the user,

said information indicating the way the information is handled in the information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source,

wherein the importance degree is calculated based on an importance degree set for each of a plurality of cells dividing a newspaper space in advance and also based on the total sum of the importance degree of the cell occupied by an article on a newspaper layout.

23. (CANCELLED)

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~An~~ The information distributing method ~~according to claim 5~~ for externally receiving necessary information, comprising:

externally outputting a request designating possibly required information;

externally receiving information as headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the received request and information indicating a way the information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;

receiving an identity of a selected headline determined by a user according to the layout information;

externally requesting distribution of the information of the set corresponding to the headline the headline identity indicates;

displaying headlines according to layout information;

prompting a user to select any of the displayed headlines and request a distribution of an information set corresponding to the selected headline; and

displaying bill information corresponding to the requested information,

wherein said information indicating the way the information is handled in the information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source, and

wherein the importance degree is calculated based on an importance degree set for each of a plurality of cells dividing a newspaper space in advance and also based on the total sum of the importance degree of the cell occupied by an article on a newspaper layout.

25. (CANCELLED)

26. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ A portable computer-readable storage medium according to claim 7 storing a program used to direct a computer for distributing information corresponding to a request from a user terminal, by:

receiving the request from the user terminal and transmitting, to the user terminal, headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the received request and information indicating a way in which these information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;

displaying the headlines on the user terminal according to the layout information so the user can select any of the displayed headlines and receiving an identity of the selected headline from the user terminal;

distributing to the user terminal the information of the set corresponding to the headline

the headline identity indicates;

distributing to the user terminal and displaying the information of the set corresponding to the headline the headline identity indicates; and

billing the user for the information of the set selected for display by the user,

said information indicating the way the information is handled in an information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source,

wherein the importance degree is calculated based on an importance degree set for each of a plurality of cells dividing a newspaper space in advance and also based on the total sum of the importance degree of the cell occupied by an article on a newspaper layout.

27. (CANCELLED)

28. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ A portable computer-readable storage medium according to claim 8—storing a program used to direct a computer for externally receiving of necessary information, by:

externally outputting a request designating possibly required information;

externally receiving information as headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the received request and information indicating a way the information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;

receiving an identity of a selected headline determined by a user according to the layout information;

externally requesting distribution of the information of the set corresponding to the headline the headline identity indicates;

displaying headlines according to laying information; and

prompting a user to select any of the displayed headlines and request distribution of an information set corresponding to the selected headline,

said information indicating the way the information is handled in the information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source,

wherein the importance degree is calculated based on an importance degree set for each of a plurality of cells dividing a newspaper space in advance and also based on the total sum of the importance degree of the cell occupied by an article on a newspaper layout.

29. (CANCELLED)

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An information distributing apparatus ~~according to claim 11~~ for distribution of information corresponding to a request from a user terminal, comprising:

a handling information retrieval unit receiving a request from the user terminal and retrieving handling information indicating a way information sets are handled in an information source, corresponding to the request;

a layout information output unit outputting to the user terminal a way the information sets are handled in the information source as layout information;

an information distribution unit distributing and displaying information of a set corresponding according to the layout information to the user terminal; and

a billing unit billing the user for the information of the set selected for display by the user, said information indicating the way the information is handled in the information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source,

wherein the importance degree is calculated based on an importance degree set for each of a plurality of cells dividing a newspaper space in advance and also based on the total sum of the importance degree of the cell occupied by an article on a newspaper layout.

31. (CANCELLED)

32. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An information ~~distributing apparatus according to claim 12~~ reception apparatus for externally distributing necessary information, comprising:

a request output unit externally outputting a request for designation of possibly required information;

a layout information output unit externally receiving information as headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the request and information indicating a way the information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;

a displaying unit displaying headlines according to the layout information and prompting a user to select any of the displayed headlines; and

a distribution request unit externally requesting distribution of the information of the set corresponding to a identified headline,

wherein the displaying unit further displaying bill information corresponding to the

requested information, and

wherein said information indicating the way the information is handled in the information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source,

wherein the importance degree is calculated based on an importance degree set for each of a plurality of cells dividing a newspaper space in advance and also based on the total sum of the importance degree of the cell occupied by an article on a newspaper layout.